

A STRONG MIDDLE CLASS IS A STRONG AMERICA

(Mrs. DINGELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, the Republican budget released today would deny working families the opportunity to earn a fair living that used to ensure a strong middle class in this country.

Their budget would hurt seniors, as Republicans have proposed four times before, by ending Medicare as we know it. It would place the burden of balancing the budget on the poor and keep arbitrary spending caps that hurt young and old alike by decimating Head Start and denying homebound seniors access to meals. It would cut Pell grants, hurting students seeking higher education, and it would leave our military lacking the critical resources we need to defend our country.

Mr. Speaker, our Democratic budget will honor our promises to seniors and will give someone who worked hard the opportunity to earn a fair wage so that they can raise their family. It will keep health care affordable and help students seeking to better themselves attain an affordable education, and it will invest in our future by repairing our crumbling roads and bridges that are vital to a growing economy.

Our budget stands for protecting Medicare, earning a fair wage, and rebuilding our infrastructure, because a strong middle class is a strong America.

THE JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

(Mrs. WAGNER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to express my outrage that Senate Democrats have refused to allow consideration of desperately needed sex trafficking legislation.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act would strengthen punishments for perpetrators and increase Federal funding for the victims of human trafficking. But instead of supporting this vitally important legislation, Senate Democrats are playing political games. They have refused to support the legislation despite its having a bipartisan group of cosponsors and unanimous approval from the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Speaker, trafficking is a real problem in every State in the United States of America. Right now, almost 300,000 American children are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. Children are being sold into sexual slavery right now while some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have been holding up this critical legislation for 2 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for Senate Democrats to drop their protests, support the thousands of vulnerable

women and children this legislation would protect, and join Republicans in the fight against human trafficking.

THERE THEY GO AGAIN

(Ms. TITUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I never thought I would be quoting Ronald Reagan but, "There you go again," another Republican budget that kicks the poor, the hungry, and the disabled to the curb, that strangles the middle class and deserts hardworking families.

"There you go again," another Republican budget that stymies research and development, abandons essential infrastructure, and stifles access to education.

"There you go again," another Republican budget that robs senior citizens, degrades the environment, and devastates our cultural institutions.

"There you go again," another so-called Republican path to prosperity that is really a road map for distress and decline for all but big corporations and the megawealthy.

So I urge folks, call those Republican Representatives and tell them that the American people don't want to and don't deserve to go that way again.

□ 1215

HONORING CONESTOGA HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

(Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Conestoga High School Music Department and their great success in this year's music festivals.

In 2015, Conestoga High School sent an impressive 32 students to the district chorus, band, and orchestra festivals; 19 students to the region chorus, band, and orchestra festivals; six students to the all-State chorus, band, and orchestra festivals; one student to All-Eastern Orchestra; and one student to All-National Orchestra.

In addition, sophomore Jason Bassiliou's music composition has been selected as the winner at the high school level in the 2015 Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Composition Program.

Under the dedicated leadership of department head Sue Dickinger, Conestoga High School Music Department represents among the best of Pennsylvania's Sixth District in the musical arts.

Music is, in fact, an integral part of a student's curriculum, and I commend the students, their teachers, and Conestoga High School on an exceptional year in music.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARCH IN SELMA

(Mrs. DAVIS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, what an occasion and privilege it was to mark the 50th anniversary of the march in Selma. As my friend and hero Congressman JOHN LEWIS said: "Selma is more than a place, it is the realization of an idea."

Selma showed us that true empowerment begins with voting rights. After 50 years of progress, the Supreme Court has rolled back the Voting Rights Act, one of the most effective laws ever passed. Now, House leadership is saying parts of the VRA are "not necessary." Literacy tests may be relics of the past but only because of the VRA.

Some States have replaced old overt forms of voter disenfranchisement with more subtle forms of voter suppression through registration, through redistricting, and voting itself. States need to stop holding people back from voting, and Congress must hold States accountable. The Court may not have done the right thing, but surely Congress can.

Let's restore the VRA and better the voting process for all voters.

NORTHERN LONG-EARED BAT RULE

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last Friday, I, along with 15 fellow House colleagues, called upon the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to provide flexibility with the agency's proposal to list the northern long-eared bat under the Endangered Species Act.

Back in December, the Fish and Wildlife Service proposed listing the northern long-eared bat as threatened under the Endangered Species Act through a special 4(d) rule, which would provide exemptions for certain activities if they met prescribed conservation activities.

Apart from forest management, the initial rule did not specify which activities would be granted exemptions. Because this species of bat can be found in 38 States, including all of Pennsylvania, a broad Endangered Species Act listing would have far-reaching impacts upon the States and permissible land uses.

Mr. Speaker, listing the northern long-eared bat as endangered has never been warranted. Since day one, the Fish and Wildlife Service has repeatedly acknowledged the underlying cause of population decline is a disease—white-nose syndrome—not habitat loss through human activity.

Rather than limiting commerce and land use activities—impacting jobs and local economies—the Fish and Wildlife